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them know their ground perfectly well, and are quite able to take full advantage of the strong points of their position. They rely entirely on the holy books, and these they have at their fingers' ends. It is granted by all that they are, almost without exception, entirely free from intolerance, and are quite unable to comprehend the zeal for conversion. A venerable Sadaw in Bhamo came and listened attentively to a Burmese sermon of Dr. Mason, the celebrated American missionary. When it was over he came and complimented him on its depth and grasp, and then suggested that the reverend doctor should go with him to offer up worship before the image of Buddha! The monks do not think, with cynical mockery, that every one should be allowed to go his own way and be blessed after his own fashion; on the contrary, they seek zealously for new truths and explanations of mysteries; but they hold it presumptuous and unwarrantable, in view of the dark secrets which envelop the life of man from its dawning to its close, to set up each his individual opinion with dogmatic certainty as the only true form and the only one that can save. They take their standpoint on the actual state of things, on the misery and sorrow which is externally bound up with the nature of the human body as it exists. They devote themselves entirely to preparing the spirit for its delivery, when it will finally rest, raised above every fear of new change, in the harmonious equipoise of Ne'ban. For this last and highest aim no hypotheses have to be assumed. They require no personal deity who would demand a special place in the system of the world, and in a possible danger to the cosmic system might incur the same risk of destruction. They remain entirely within the clearly defined horizon of their limit of vision, and are therefore very difficult to attack in argument.

Nevertheless schisms have arisen from time to time, and exist at the present day, but they have sprung more from revolt against excessive austerity, or corresponding laxity, than from any real difference on doctrinal points. The Lord Buddha had hardly died before one of the most aged of the disciples, Subhadra, thus addressed the assembled brethren: "Revered ones, cease to mourn. We are now happily released from the rule of the great Sramana; we shall no

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more be tormented with 'this is allowable' and 'that is not allowable'; we can now do what we wish, and leave undone what we do not care for." To put an end to this scandal to religion, and to fix definitely the bonds of morality, the great disciple, Kathapa, called together, forty-five years after the Buddha's death, in the year 543 B.C., the first great Council, at Rajagriha, in the country of Magadha. Kathapa himself was president. The Wini was read by Upali, whom Shin Gautama himself had pointed out as the most learned of his followers, and the Dharma by Ananda, the personal attendant and favourite disciple of the Budh. During seven months the various points in dispute were considered from all points, and after rulings had been publicly and authoritatively given, the Council broke up. Thus were the three "baskets of the Law" first settled.

But the backsliders were not corrected, and they gradually increased in number, until, one hundred years later, it was found necessary to call together another synod. There was now a considerable body of schismatics, and they formulated a demand for definite relaxations from the severity of the laws. The Council was again held in the country of Magadha (the modern Oudh), this time in the town of Wethali. The king, Kalathawka, built a splendid hall, and when all was ready, himself placed the ivory fan on the ledge of the pulpit, and sent a message to the members of the Thengă who had assembled for the conference, saying, "Lords, my task is finished." The relaxations demanded were then discussed. The most important were as follows:—Food might be taken until the shade of the sun was two inches in length; whereas Shin Gautama had directed that for the curbing of the flesh none should be eaten after noontide.

Whey might be drunk after mid-day; forbidden as being a component part of milk, and therefore approaching animal food.

Tari, or palm toddy, might be taken, because it looks like water. This was a particularly bold demand, seeing that all fermented liquors are forbidden, and that in modern days the same plea might be urged on behalf of gin.

Gold and silver might be accepted as alms; the use of them being strictly prohibited.

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A junior might lawfully copy a senior even in what is wrong; whereas no example could be any valid excuse for a wrong act.

Subsequent permission might cover an act; whereas the Wini required prior permission.

The restrictions against indulgences were to be in force only in the monasteries; and not for those who might be sojourning in villages.

These points, after lengthy discussion, were all given against the dissenters, and degradation was awarded them as a punishment.

Still matters got worse, and in 241 B.C. the great king Athawka, of Pataliputra, brought about the third and last great Council to cleanse the Church. After nine months' public reading of the Book of Rules and of the most excellent Law, 60,000 heretics were expelled from the Church, and it was resolved to propagate the religion far and wide. This last decision was fraught with the most momentous consequences to Burma, for among the missionaries sent north, south, east, and west from Behar were the two, Thawna and Ôttara, who proceeded to the country of Suvarna Bhumi, the "Golden Land," and landing at Thatôn, now north of Maulmein, but then on the sea-coast, proceeded to disseminate the Buddhist doctrines amongst the tribes in the great river-valleys of the country. It is important to notice that the doctrines they brought with them had just been revised and confirmed by a great Council of the Church. Since then, throughout all Burma, the old geniolatry has been displaced by the teachings of the Buddha. The regulations, introduced then in their first purity, have been retained ever since practically unchanged, so that at the present time Buddhism exists in Burma in a form much nearer to that which Shin Gautama taught than is found in any country where the Three Precious Things are held in reverence.

The only sect which has at any time started any doctrinal heresy is that of the Paramats. They reject the worship before pagodas and images, and pray only to the Nyan-daw, the godlike wisdom, which abides like a mountain of fire in the heavens, invisible to mortal eyes, and taking no interest and exercising no influence over mundane things. These

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1. Datu zedi, erected over relics of the Buddha, or models of these.

2. Paribawga zedi, over the sacred eight utensils, or their imitations.

3. Oddeitha zedi, enclosing images.

4. Damma zedi, enclosing the sacred books, such as the *Bitaghat thôn-bôn*, the three baskets of the Law, and other sacred volumes, like the *Bagawa*, appointed to be read during Lent.

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It may be well to remark that the word "pagoda" is not known at all in Burmese, either in its English or Cinghalese form, any more than the word Mandarin is known in China. Such a building is called a Zedi, from the Pali chaitya, meaning the offering-place, or place of prayer, but the expression Payā, applicable as well to the image as to the shrine, is most frequently used in reference to the more famous centres of worship.

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The greatest of the payās, such as the Shwe Dagôn in Rangoon, the most famous of all; the Shwe Maw-daw, the lotus-shrine of Pegu; the Shwe San-daw, the depository of the sacred hair at Prome; and the Mahā Myat Muni, the temple of the most exalted saint in Mandalay; all these were founded by single individuals, or brothers to whom the most excellent Master had given hairs from his head to deposit in the specified place. How the exact spot was found, and how successive kings increased the size of the first erection, and donations flowed in from the pious in all parts of the world to beautify and preserve the building, all these particulars are recorded in the palm-leaf records of the various temples. Many later Zedi, however, have been erected by villages, or by public subscription in whole districts, as pious memorials, or to commemorate some particular event, as well as for the obvious purposes of public convenience on the duty days of the month. Very many, and among them some of the most beautiful, are, on the other hand, the outcome of purely individual desire for merit. Some, such as the chaste, white Sibyo shrine at Mengôn, near Mandalay, are built in remembrance of individuals; the graceful pagoda mentioned being erected by a recent monarch in memory of a favourite queen. Under all, however, to render

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778 them sacred, are buried some of the holy things. Without these, no hti, or umbrella, could be placed on the summit of the spire.

These objects are deposited in the tāpana taik, a square chamber, built in the basement of every payā, and always the first thing finished. Not only one, but many things are thus enclosed. Captain Cox, who saw the first beginnings of the huge Mengôn pagoda, describes the tāpaṅa taik of that vast amount of brickwork. It measured sixty-one and a half feet square, and was eleven feet deep. The interior was plastered white and gaily painted, and was divided into a number of compartments of various sizes to receive the offerings of the king and the courtiers, the innermost naturally containing the most sacred. The dedicated treasures themselves were very numerous, including a great variety of miniature pagodas and monasteries in silver and gold of varying degrees of purity; images of the same materials and of polished alabaster, some of them four feet high; a number of gold caskets, probably containing models of the sacred teeth and bones; besides these, there was a miscellaneous collection of other things—slabs of coloured glass, precious stones, white jars, such as are used by the royal family, and finally a soda-water machine, then almost as much a novelty
000 in England as in Burma. The offerings did not strike Captain Cox as being very valuable, but the then king, Bodaw Payā, cared a good deal more for his own special glory than for the raising of religion. Not long afterwards he claimed to be a new Buddha, and because the Sacred Order would not recognise his right to the title, turned heretic, and victimised the monks with renegade zeal.

778 The relic chamber at the great Shwe Maw-daw offers a
173 very decided contrast. The Buddha gave two hairs of his head to two brothers, with instructions to enshrine them on the Thu-da-thana hill. An earthquake revealed the exact spot to them, and a host of byammās and nat-dēwas came down to take part in the depositing of the relics. A chamber, ten cubits square, was prepared, and at the bottom was laid a slab of pearly white marble, set with diamonds. A similar slab, studded with emeralds, formed the lid. The Tha-gyā king placed a golden cradle in the centre of the bottom

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slab, and round this were arranged images of the chief disciples of Shin Gautama, each holding a golden bouquet. The jewelled casket containing the hairs was placed on the cradle, and high festival was held for many days. Numbers of other images of the Buddha himself, and of many eminent disciples, were placed round the sides of the tāpana taik, and countless offerings were made, the Tha-gyā king giving ten billions of gold, each of his queens forty thousand of silver; the father of the two brethren one thousand of gold, and many others equally great sums. But this was in the brave days of old, when imagination was vivid and evidence cursory.

Still even nowadays very costly offerings are often deposited in the relic chamber. An almost invariable gift is a representation in gold of the Lord Buddha, with the hooded snake raising itself over him, as in the images of Vishnu in India, or a great model of the Great Master as he received the supreme wisdom under the bawdi-bin. Examples of the last may be seen in the South Kensington Museum, as also of the Sabupati payā, representing him with the tower-like royal crown, the wings on legs and arms, and other emblems recalling the king's son who went out to dedicate himself as the Buddha and the conqueror of Mān-nat. Open-handed piety is twice as frequent as of yore, only the chroniclers of modern days have not the florid imaginations of their predecessors.

The dedication of a payā is a high festival, but there is no prescribed ritual in the sacred books, and each individual pôngyi, after reciting the precepts and the Itti pithaw, has a form of his own, embracing portions of the law and the sacred discourses. A prominent function in the service, as indeed always in giving alms, is the yeset-cha, the pouring out of water drop by drop on the ground. The great king Bimbathara did it himself from a gold cup when he presented the Weluwun or Bamboo-grove monastery, and so likewise it is recorded of the rich man Anātabein. The idea is to share the merit of the action with all creatures, and at the same time to call to witness, besides the mathôndaye nats, all gods and men, that the donor may have due reward for his piety. The same thing is frequently

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And kneeling pray that they may gain
Release from fitful change and pain.
Ah, Saviour Buddha, hear them call
And grant the long, last life to all.

High striving to the upper air,
Great convent of the Sacred Hair,
Thou'st stood upon the foreland's brow
From misty ages e'en till now.
The Budh himself, with his own mouth,
Stood on this hill, and, looking south,
Foretold that on this spot should stand
A fane far-famed in farthest land;
And hither came the brethren twain
And reared with stone of precious vein
A lordly pile and gilt it o'er
And many a monarch added store,
Till last of all our Sikkè came
And joined to theirs a pious name.
From youngest years till hoarest hours,
Peguans all, great fame is ours;
Two Henthas dwelt here, male and mate,
Ten thousand kings kept regal state,
And ever till the kalpas end
Will pious pilgrims hither wend.
Ah, Sikkè, great reward is thine,
Thy fame doth last while lasts the shrine
And ere the shrine falls, falls the world.

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Pegu was the capital of the Talaing kingdom of Hanthawadi. Shin Gautama foretold that it would be founded in the 1116th year of his religion, and gave two of his hairs to two brothers, Mahā Thala and Sula Thala, to enshrine on the Thudathana Myinthila Hill. A pagoda fifty cubits high was erected over them, and this was the original of the Shwe Maw (or Hmaw)-daw Payā.

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CHAPTER XVI

THE LEGEND OF THE RANGOON PAGODA

AT the end of the last world-period five lotus-buds sprang up on the Theinguttara Hill, where now the Shwe Dagôn pagoda stands. They opened their leaves and disclosed each of them within its chalice a thengan, the holy yellow robe of the monastic brethren. Then a huge bird settled on the top of the hill and laid an egg, and from this was presently hatched the kalawaik, the carrying bird of Vishnu, which seized the sacred garments and flew up to the heavens. This was an omen foretelling the appearance of five Buddhas in the present world cycle, and accordingly the universe which had existed in the preceding kalpa was shortly afterwards destroyed, with Mount Meru, the enclosing Set-ya-wala hills, the six heavens of the nat-dêwas, and many of the lower seats of Byammās. Then followed myriads of years of chaos; then myriads more while the present world called Badda was being constructed atom by atom, and at last the earth was ready and prepared to receive the first Buddha, Kaukkathan. He left his staff on the Theinguttara Hill; his successor Gawnagông deposited his water-filter beside it, and the third Buddha, Kathapa, added a portion of his robe.

In the time of the fourth Buddha, Gautama, there lived on the Theinguttara Hill a gigantic scorpion, so huge that it devoured every day an elephant, and the tusks of its many victims were set up in a great ring fence round about its den. One day seven foreign ships passed along the coast. The sailors saw the white glimmer of the ivory from far out at sea, and landed to ascertain what it was. They began loading their ships with the precious treasure; and were working

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their hardest, when suddenly they saw the giant scorpion coming straight at them. They rushed on board, cut their cables, and stood out to sea. But here a new danger awaited them. A monster crab reared two gigantic claws out of the waters and threatened to crush anything that passed between. But there was no retreat, and, overwhelmed with terror, they drove before the wind. The vessels just managed to pass through without touching the claws with their yards or masts; but the scorpion, following in hot pursuit, rushed up against both pincers with its bulky body, and they closed in an instant, crushing and rending the monstrous prey. The crab itself died of the poisonous food, and the neighbourhood of the holy hill was thus freed from its terrors.

Not long afterwards another ship sailed in these waters. Near Twanté, a town about twenty miles from Rangoon, lived a pious Talaing merchant, who had two sons named Pu, or dove, and Tapaw, or plenty. These young men heard that there was a famine in the western lands, and set sail thither with a shipload of rice. They landed at the mouth of the Ganges, and having procured five hundred waggons, loaded them with their grain and travelled into the Wethali country. There one day their waggons were suddenly arrested, and as it were chained to the earth. While they were seeking for the cause, a nat, who in a previous existence had been their mother, appeared to them and asked: "Desire ye store of gold and precious things, or rather desire ye heavenly treasure?" They answered, "Heavenly treasure." Thereupon the nat bade them go to where Shin Gautama, the embryo Buddha, was sitting beneath the yaza-yatana tree in the seventh period of seven days' meditation, which immediately preceded his becoming perfect. They laid a sack of rice reverently at his feet, and in return received four hairs each. The Buddha renamed them Tapôt-tha and Palika, and enjoined them to deposit the hairs on the Theinguttara Hill, beside the relics of the three preceding Budhs. The place was to be determined by the "takun," a felled wood-oil tree "lying athwart," so that neither the top nor the roots touched the ground.

The brothers, happy in the possession of such inestimable relics, enclosed them in a golden casket, hastened back

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to their ship and set sail. But they visited many a distant shore without gaining any tidings of the whereabouts of the Theinguttara mount. In vain they besought the nats, the bilus, and yekkathas, good genii, ogres, and demons, of whom there were many upon earth in those days. The spirits knew no more than the men. At last the king of the Tha-gyas took pity upon them, came down from the heavens, and appearing before the seekers in the guise of a nat, told them to return to their own native land. There, not far from their birthplace, Twanté, was the hill they sought for, and the only being who could point it out to them was the guardian spirit of the hill, the aged Sulé nat. But this guardian nat had lived so long upon earth that his eyelids had become weak and heavy and had fallen together, so that he was stone blind. Before he could help them at all it would be necessary to restore to him his eyesight, and this could only be done by hoisting up his eyelids with two great wooden props. The Sulé nat was of gigantic stature, and the two brothers sought about in the forest for the tallest oil-palms they could find, cut them down, lopped them into shape, and then went out in quest of the aged guardian spirit. At length they found him so thickly covered with ancient moss and lichens that it was difficult to recognise a living creature in him. When he was asked where the Theinguttara Hill lay he became suspicious, and brought forward his blindness as an excuse for not being able to indicate its situation. But the two brothers were prepared with their remedy. They got their two great beams into position, and after much trouble managed to hoist up his heavy lids so far that the light fell in a narrow streak on his pupils. Sulé then indicated with a wave of his hand in what direction they were to go, and Tapôt-tha and Palika set off again on their search. But here they encountered a new difficulty. Instead of one hill they found three, with a lake in the middle of them, and there was nothing to show where the staff, the filter, and the bathing robe of the previous three Budhs lay buried. They were in despair, but the king of the Tha-gyās again came to their aid. He descended with his subject dêwas during the night and united the three peaks into one. The next day the brothers felled the

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tree on the summit and it fulfilled the required conditions. "It remained poised on its centre on the peak. Its top touched not the ground, and its root touched not the ground. Therefore the place was called in the Môn language, Takun." A pagoda was built twenty-seven feet high, and all the land round about on which its shadow fell between sunrise and sunset was consecrated to it for ever. The dêwa king prepared a golden boat to hold the casket containing the hairs, and this vessel circled about perpetually on the lake, and was protected by water-wheels, whose spokes were prolonged into great swords and knives that struck out in all directions and turned without ceasing, except for a moment at midday, when they halted for the space of time during which a woman might draw out a thread from her spinning-loom.

Long after, the royal elder brother of China, King Udibwa, during his wars with the Burmans, was exceedingly anxious to carry off the sacred relics which are deposited in the Rangoon shrine. He prepared a magic figure in human form and despatched it to steal the Budhs' remains. The creature crawled all the way down the Irrawaddy on its stomach until it arrived at the suburb of Rangoon called Kemindine ("the looking-post"). There it raised its head to look for a moment, and was so overcome by the splendour of the shrine that it delayed too long, and when at length it stretched out its hands to steal the relics, the favourable moment at noon was passed, and the whirling swords cut it in pieces. Since then the whole of the treasures have been walled up in the relic-chamber, whence nothing but the entire destruction of the payā could remove them. The marvellous wealth of the shrine has been a fruitful source of wonder and speculation to many. Nevertheless the statement of Sonnerat that the spire, which has now risen to a height of nearly 370 feet, has a narrow funnel descending from the top down to the basement, and that down this shaft princes, rich men, and the religious of all nations cast gold and silver and precious stones, has a foundation only in the imagination of the Gallic writer. The crown or "umbrella" at the top is known to be crusted thick on the upper ring with precious stones, and from it hang scores of jewelled gold bells, placed there in recent times, but to the

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mysterious relic-chamber no one has penetrated for hundreds of years, nor probably ever will. Neither the shrine itself, nor the relics, nor the images, are the objects of the adoration of the pious. The Burman, it cannot be too much urged, is not an idolater. He worships neither relic nor image. The pagoda and the figure only supply him with a seemly place to utter the praises of the great Buddha, and to form resolutions to imitate, as far as he can, the charity and the sinless life of the great model.

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and little morsels of food. Often, if the village is larger, the shrine is much more pretentious, assuming almost the size and appearance of a zayat, a large tectum or roof, gabled and supported with red posts, the platform ornamented, and with a dais at one end, on which a representation of the nat is placed at the feast time, which, in imitation of the pagoda festivals, occurs at a regular fixed season. At other times these images are kept stowed away in an adjoining chamber, built for the purpose. It is particularly irritating to an educated Burman to see these absurd figures, which remind one of nothing so much as the fetiches of the prognathous African. Two gaudily dressed puppets, masquerading with spire-like crown, and royal, sharp-pointed swords, represent the much-feared nats, Shwe Pyin-gyi and Shwe Pyin-ngè, the Nyi-daw, Naung-daw, the Royal Younger Brother and the Royal Elder Brother, who command much respect in the neighbourhood of Mandalay and in Upper Burma generally. A still more dreaded spirit is one whose representation figures in a shrine at Tagaung, one of the ancient capitals of the country, half-way between Mandalay and Bhamaw. He appears simply as a head on a post, four feet high or thereabouts. A spire-like crown rests on his head, his eyes protrude and goggle in semi-globular wrath, asinine ears and a Punch-like nose complete the likeness, for he has no mouth, and his body is that of a dragon. Every one avoids his temple as much as possible, but the inhabitants of the village bow in that direction before they venture to do anything, and passing boatmen kindle lamps and offer flowers, of which he is said to be particularly fond, and fruit, for the nat has an incorrigible habit of giving people the stomach-ache when he is offended, and death punishes the recalcitrant. "Tagaung colic" is a recognised ailment with the Burmese faculty. The demon is said to have been one of the ancient kings of the place, who acquired his power from magical arts which he learned in Northern India. Three famous pagodas in the defile take their names from episodes in his life; and his two sons founded the dynasty of Prome. Oftenest of all, however, the nat-shrine contains no figure. It is occupied only by the viewless spirits of the air.

First in the list of personal spirits may be considered the

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suffering no one to enter till he came to the person decided by fate to rule the country, usually some one of the royal lineage, or of some other princely line, who had wandered or been carried off from court. Then the horse waited patiently till the sleeper should wake up; the tales always represent the prince as asleep when the chariot arrives. When he rouses himself he steps into the chariot, and without guidance, the horse forthwith gallops back to the palace and the tabindaing finds a husband and the country a king. Alompra became sovereign, only in a slightly different way, but his descent from Mahā Thamada must be unimpeachable.

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Long before he took up arms and won for himself the throne, the soothsayers saw about him signs that betokened his coming dignity. When he slept his arms shone like fire; vultures perched on the houses of his enemies; gorgeous butterflies and gay-plumaged birds and strange animals entered his dwelling; he dug up an ancient image of the Buddha not far from his doorstep; when he came to fight it was manifest that he was favoured even beyond the great men of old. He possessed a sword that flew through the air and cut off heads; his shoes enabled him to clear miles at a stride; his fairy spear could spit a whole line of soldiers at once; his javelin could be hurled to any distance; finally, as a fifth weapon, he had a gun which never missed its mark, and was brought down to him by a thagyā. The possession of these five weapons at once proved his right to the throne and secured his holding it. It is true that some of the omens which signalised his right have appeared in others with very different result. A Karen minlaung, or embryo king, displayed the same fire-streaming arms, and raised a rebellion since the British occupation of Pegu. He gained a considerable following, and seemed formidable for a time, till the English wise men pointed out that the fiery glow was produced by rubbing phosphorus on his skin. Then all went against him as an impostor, and he very soon vanished into the hill-country. Similarly, in 1858, a poor fisherman at Twante, a large village not far from Rangoon, dragged up in his net a small image of the Buddha. Such discoveries are always looked upon as an omen of high

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destiny, and according to the common superstition, the fisherman believed that he would rise in dignity, restore the Talaing kingdom, and revive religion. He announced the supernatural call in the village bazaar. A few desperate characters joined him, took possession of the town, and issued a proclamation calling upon all the faithful to rally to his standard. But the British civil authorities stepped in and broke up the procession which was going in solemn state to the pagoda to inaugurate and consecrate the fisherman in his new profession. The claimant of royal honours escaped at the time, but was afterwards given up by the villagers. In each of these cases there was deception or misapprehension of the meaning of the omens, but the abundance of the signs in the case of Alompra disposes of the assertion that he was a mere adventurer. He himself thoroughly believed in his high destiny, and talked of it in right royal fashion to Captain Baker, an ambassador sent to him in 1755 by the Honourable East India Company. This gentleman, the commander of an East Indiaman, who, under the instructions of his employers, evidently regarded the great conqueror as little better than a savage, brought him a present of a chest or two of gunpowder, a couple of muskets and carbines, a gilt looking-glass, some red earth in bags, and half a dozen bottles of lavender water (there is no mention of glass beads), and offered Alompra the assistance of the great company. Whereupon his majesty burst into a defiant laugh and replied in the following fashion: "Have I asked, or do I want any assistance to reduce my enemies to subjection? Let none conceive such an opinion! Have I not in three years' time extended my conquests three months' journey in every quarter without the help of cannon or muskets? Nay, I have with bludgeons only, opposed and defeated these Peguans who destroyed the capital of this kingdom, and took the prince prisoner; and a month hence I intend to go with a great force to Dagôn (Rangoon), where I have an army now lying, when I will advance to the walls of Pegu, blockade and starve them out of it, which is the last town I have now to take to complete my conquest, and then I will go in quest of Bourno (the French governor of Syriam, whom he afterwards actually did put to

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death). Captain, see this sword; it is now three years since it has been constantly exercised in chastising my enemies; it is indeed almost blunt with use; but it shall be continued to the same till they are utterly dispersed. Do not talk of assistance. I require none. The Peguans I can wipe away as thus (drawing the palm of one hand over the other). See these arms and this thigh (drawing his loose coat-sleeve up to the armpit, and lifting his pasoh, so as to display a bare tattooed leg); amongst a thousand you cannot see my match. I can crush a hundred such as the King of Pegu." (Quoted from Crawford.)

Two years later he talked to Ensign Lester in the same bombastic strain, telling him that he would go to Madras, and that if a nine-pounder shot was to hit him it could do him no harm, with a good deal more to the same effect. He is described at this time, when he was about forty-five years of age, as five feet eleven in height, and of a powerful build, with a long, but not a thin face, the expression not being improved by a number of smallpox pitmarks. He had a broad but very retreating forehead, a characteristic shared by all his descendants, and prominent in the case of King Mindôn.

Alaungpaya, then, was no feeble founder of the present line of successors to the great Mahā Thamada. He certainly had the power to command, and his military successes carried the peacock flag from far away towards Dacca, down to the Siamese capital. Assuredly he was a worthy follower of the great first king, and the Burmese believed firmly in the unbroken character of the succession. Accordingly all the old Indian and Sakyan customs were carefully observed by the Burmese royal family. Such were the marriage with half-sisters, and the consequent preserving unmarried of the king's eldest daughter; the reverence of the three most excellent animals, the peacock of the sun, the hare of the moon, and the kalawaik, the carrying bird of Vishnu, whose eyes like jewels look friendly on the stranger; and the beit-theit, the consecration by pouring out of water at the accession. Marriage with half-sisters was only allowed to the king, not to the people at large, or even to the princes of the blood-royal. The throne was painted over with representations of

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
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CHAPTER LXI

SELECTIONS FROM THE LITERATURE

THE following is taken from the Mahā Yazawin:—

The Queen Shin-saw-bu

539 In Ava there lived a very learned pôngyi called Bamè-soda, and a rich man in the capital gave him his son Dhamma-sedi to bring up and instruct. This youth was possessed of very wonderful powers, due to virtues which he had exercised in previous existences. By means of these powers he brought to life one day a fowl which had been roasted and placed on the platter before his teacher. From this circumstance, to the present day, the place where the fowl scratched and sought its food is called Shwe Gyet-yet (the more popular legend assigns a different reason). On the same day it happened that a young hunter appeared in the monastery and begged the holy brother to teach him wisdom. As a present he had brought with him a roasted hare. He lifted the cover off the basket and the hare sprang up alive and healthy immediately and ran away. The pôngyi was very much struck at these two miracles, all the more because they happened on the same day, and he took the two highly gifted youths for his only scholars and taught them all he knew in the way of scholarship and mystic lore. Both were very zealous in their studies, but Dhamma-sedi learnt one letter more than his fellow-student.

539 ●173 Engwa-min, Thihathu, the Burman king, levied war upon the King of Rangoon, Bya-ngya-yan, and having defeated him, carried off his sister Saw Bomi. The young lady, who now got the name of Shin-saw-bu, agreed to

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
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share his throne on the condition that she should be allowed to institute religious ceremonies to remind her of the holy pagoda of her own Talaing town. Captivated by her charms, the king consented, and recommended to her notice, as being the most likely to give her aid, the two most highly honoured pôngyis of the capital, Dhamma-sedi and Dhamma-bāla, the ex-hunter. The wily princess managed to arrange a love intrigue with the two yahans, and by their aid succeeded in escaping to Rangoon, where in no very great time she was placed on the throne, and built a golden monastery for the two holy men to live in. Out of gratitude she wished to raise one of her two friends to share the throne with her, but the choice was a hard matter, for they were both equally well favoured, and no man could say which was the more learned. She resolved therefore to put their wit to the test and to abide by the issue.

The two holy men were summoned to her audience-chamber, where before her throne were placed two alms-bowls: one perfectly empty and plain, but decorated with the royal insignia; the other more elaborately worked and full of the choicest delicacies. The rivals were bidden to place themselves, according to their liking, by the one or the other. Dhamma-bāla chose the juncates, but the wiser Dhamma-sedi walked straight to the royal thabeit. The latter therefore received the hand of the queen after he had left the order.

Dhamma-bāla was full of wrath and envy, and forthwith created countless armies by reciting powerful bedin linga over a bowl full of rice, every grain of which grew into a soldier. But Dhamma-sedi was skilful in the same arts, and by virtue of the additional letter which he had learned was able always to overcome the machinations of his opponent, so that at last Dhamma-balā saw himself overcome at all points, and took to flight to save his life. But he had not thrown off his long monkish robes, and his feet got entangled in them, and he fell and was overtaken by his pursuers, who killed him at a place where now the village Thengan Nyôn stands, "the spot where the yellow robe betrayed." The queen only reigned three years, but in that time she greatly enlarged and beautified the pagodas of Shwe Dagôn at Rangoon and Shwe Hmaw Daw at

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
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Pegu. Dhamma-sedi reigned after her gloriously and highly honoured for thirty-one years.

The main points of this bit of Mahā Yaza-win history are correct. Shin-saw-bu was carried off in A.D. 1439 and did escape from Ava to be placed on the Peguan throne. Rangoon cantonments are to this day known among the Burmese as Shin-saw-bu Myo. King Dhamma-sedi was celebrated for his wisdom and for his intercourse with foreign powers. He received embassies from China, Siam, and Ceylon. He was also certainly originally a monk; his magic arts are another thing. His death is placed in A.D. 1491. The slight suggestion of the casket scene in the *Merchant of Venice* will be noticed.

The following is a favourite fable:—

Why Ants are found everywhere

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All the animals of the forest came to the lion-king to pay him homage. The little ant came with the rest to bow down before the king of beasts, but the noblemen drove it away with scorn. When the king of the ants heard of it he was very angry, and sent a worm to creep into the ear of the lion and torment him. The lion roared aloud with pain, and all the animals came running from every side to offer their services and fight the enemy, wherever or whoever he might be. But none of them could do any real good. They could not get at the worm. At last, after many humble embassies, the king of the ants was prevailed upon to send one of his subjects, who crept into the lion's ear and pulled out the worm. Since that time the ants have enjoyed the privilege of living everywhere and in any country, while the other animals had all of them their special places assigned at the division of the earth.

The following, the fourteenth decision of the Princess Thudhammasari, is considered a legal precedent as well as the inculcation of a moral principle:—

The Dog, the Cat, and the Ichneumon

In the time of the Buddha Gawnagông, four pupils, a prince, a young noble, a rich man's son, and a poor man's

set aside for the 37 plates, the people are served. 776

"The Nat ceremony at the Nat-Kauk IN is for KHIN BAING, the Indian Nat. He is given offerings of chicken, liquor, Htamsins, etc. This Nat lives in a tree and he has made this known by possessing someone and speaking through him. After the food is offered to this Nat, the people who gave the offering eat it all up, drink all the liquor and present the Htamsins to the aged and elderly. The gold leaf is stuck onto the trunk of the Nat tree, and the black rice is thrown away. 796

"The person who works his IN for himself alone has to provide for his own offerings. If the IN undertaking is a cooperative one the various members get together to give offerings to the IN nat."

In holding a ceremony for U SHIN GYI there are some items offered which are only just sufficient for his consumption, and for a few other people. Some items of food, however, are prepared in sufficient quantity to feed the whole village.

The items used in the yearly offering to the IN nat KHIN BAING includes:- One chicken, one bottle of liquor, jaggery, Rs. 2/8 worth of KAUKHNYIN or black rice and about four condensed milk tins of rice. No Htamsins. The nat who likes Htamsins is the HSE-DAW-SHIN nat to whom King Anawratha himself is believed to have given offerings.

Items used in a single ceremony for U Shin Gyi includes:- Three condensed milk tins of black rice or KAUKHNYIN @ Rs. 8/-, ten coconuts @ Re. 1/- each, 50 ticals of LAPHET or Burmese pickled tea @ Rs. 6/- per viss (100 ticals), about 4 or 6 annas worth of betel quid, about three viss of jaggery, costing Rs. 5/-, 8 packets of 10 candles @ 2 annas per packet and flowers just sufficient to place on the altar. Rs. 2/- worth of flowers are bought @ one anna per bundle. The flowers are mainly SHIN GHE (diamond decorated). Some flowers need not be purchased, but can be easily gathered from the trees. THA HYAY (pleasant country) flowers and coconut kernels are also placed on the altar. These kernels are obtained free of charge from the coconut trees. [173]

Buddhism

The practices of Buddhism are both a religious duty and a social occasion for the family. The difficulty of separating the everyday "secular" activities from the supernatural will be especially apparent in the passages below. 779

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

The rise of the *Nibhatkhin* was the result of the rise of the vernacular literature, for then learning had reached the people. But we do not quite know at what time the *Nibhatkhin* first came into being. According to tradition, the custom of holding religious processions and pageants had existed long before 1752, about which time the interlude and the *Hawsa* (a recitation of a story in verse) came into being, but how long before nobody can tell. However, as it must have taken some time for the vernacular literature to take root, I adopt tentatively 1531 to 1752 as the period of the *Nibhatkhin*.

For the story of the development of the *Nibhatkhin*, I am dependent on tradition alone. The tradition of its development from the pageant is quite logical. Moreover, it is general and not confined to a particular district. I have discussed it with various Burmese scholars and I have made inquiries in far-away villages, and always I find the same tradition. In some out-of-the-way villages, which the influences that affected the drama at the capital had failed to reach, the development of the *Nibhatkhin* from the pageant was within living memory. Until recently, in such villages, one could even see the *Nibhatkhin* in its various stages of development. One village would be presenting a procession, another a pageant, a third would be staging a fully developed *Nibhatkhin*; in all the villages, their particular practice had been the custom for many years, further development having been checked by the introduction of the drama in its more mature stages by touring troupes of professional actors, and it had continued to exist side by side with the performances of strolling players, just as some miracle plays continued to be presented in certain places in England during the heyday of the Elizabethan

Under Bayinnaung (1551–81) the whole of Indo-China, the outlying provinces of China, and Manipur owed allegiance to the Burmese king. After his death, the Empire decayed until the ruler of Pegu, who had become independent, defeated the Burmese, and turned Burma into a Talaing Empire in 1752. The Empire was short-lived, for in the same year Alaungpaya rebelled, founded the last Burmese dynasty, and 'Burmanised' the Talaings by force. He and his successors turned Burma into one united kingdom, which with the Shan States, Siam, Manipur, and Assam, formed the Burmese Empire. The period 1752–1819 was the Age of Triumph, a fuller account of which is given in chap. ii.

The Burmese lost Assam, Manipur, and the native provinces of Arakan and Tenasserim to the British in 1824. The rest of Lower Burma fell into British hands in 1852. On 1 January 1886 the whole country was proclaimed a province of the Indian Empire.

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1980) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

drama. In 1916 I saw a *Nibbathbin* at the obscure town of Pauk. For this period, I am greatly indebted to the notes made by my father. They are the results of inquiries and researches spread over a period of forty or fifty years. I realize that to many European scholars the section on the *Nibbathbin* must appear conjectural in its dependence on tradition. My plea is that at present there is nothing else to depend on.[1]

With regard to the interlude, I am on surer ground. Again I depend much on tradition, but it is now tradition supported by evidence. Besides the general and common tradition, there is the tradition of the spirit mediums and actors, and, as I shall explain, the tradition of my own family.

Professional tradition of the mediums and actors is more reliable than common tradition because the two professions, especially the former, are closed fraternities, and as written records were never in use, they handed down the facts regarding the nature and history of their callings by word of mouth. To them oral tradition was as strong as written records. Moreover, their oral tradition can be checked by the stage conventions which exist at the present day. The various stage conventions are considered in Chapter VII.

The tradition in my family[2] begins from about the year 1800. About that time, an officer[3] in the victorious army of King Bodawpaya

[1] Even Harvey, who wrote his *History of Burma* at Exeter College, Oxford, often accepts oral tradition supported by no other evidence as substantially correct (*History of Burma*, pp. 33, 41, 211, 252, 267, 299). In two instances, pp. 33 and 41, the tradition cited dates back to the eleventh century A.D.

[2] My father is U Pein, District Magistrate, Burma Commission, now retired. In Burma, historical researches and inquiries are often made by administrative officials, as their duties carry them all over the country and to the remotest villages. Messrs Harvey, Stewart, Furnivall—great names in the Burma Research Society—are all officials belonging to the Burma Commission.

[3] He was Maha Minhla Mindin Raza.

I have to cite in this section the full names and official positions of some members of my family because:

1. As the Burmese use no surnames, my name alone would not convey anything regarding their identity.

2. The service record of the family may perhaps be construed as evidence in favour of the reliability of its tradition. G. E. Harvey, op. cit., p. 310 where he rejects Fuhrer's statement regarding an inscription because the 'precious slab has never been produced, and in view of Fuhrer's service record its production is essential.'

23: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
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90. PAYA SUN-KAN.

(*Payá sun-kan*), or privately prepared, is conveyed. The day is devoted to contemplation, and the night is passed at the *zayát*. Those who keep the duty-day present offerings at the *zedi* and the adjoining *kyaung*. At either of these places a *yahán* is invited to rehearse the precepts, which the laity chant verse by verse after his lead (*thilo-kan*). Passages from other scriptures are added, with their interpretations. This is called *Tayá-haw*—the preaching of the Law. The great Mun King, Yazadiyít of Pegu, in the year 1400 A.D., is reported to have been so impressed by the preaching of a *yahán* that he abandoned a campaign on which he had embarked. More than once in Burman history the peaceful contest of building rival temples has been substituted for battle by opposing armies.

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The Buddha has passed out of existence. While existent, all that the Buddha could accomplish for any being was the human service of showing him the way to work out deliverance by individual effort. Self-reliance is the cardinal principle. There is none to hear prayer. The true significance of the popular worship is not apprehended unless this be borne in mind. No virtue can surpass that of the Inestimable Master (*Myasswa Payá*) who fulfilled the Law and bequeathed it to men. To cultivate the memory of his transcendent merit is itself meritorious in the first degree. Such is the personal side of the cult, to which the effigies of the founder appeal. Before the images of the Buddha are performed the gestures of homage, and are placed offerings symbolical of veneration — tapers lighted at the shrine, flowers

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91. YAHAN RECITING THE PRECEPTS (TAYA-HAW).

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

385. TEMPLES RAISED BY A MODERN KING (THE KUTHODAW p. 122).

historic centres of Burman dominion. Sagáing was abandoned for the last time in 1776 for a new capital at Amayapôya (*Amarapúra*—Abode of Immortals) half-way between Ava (*Inwa*) and the modern capital Mandálé, which was founded in 1857, after the accession of King Mindôn Min. The most ancient capital is Tagáung, one hundred miles north of Mandalé. Other capitals were Shwebô, Myinzaing, Pannya. The capitals of the Taláing dominion were Thatôn, Pegu, and Prome (*Pye*). Rangoon (*Yangôn*), at the meeting point of five navigable channels, and with anchorage for the largest ships, has out-distanced all competitors since the modern development of commerce.

For the history of Burma the only available source is the official chronicle kept by command of the kings—*mahâ-yazawin*. The first part is occupied with the legendary origin of the race from the cloud-dwellers—*Byamma* (the Burman form of *Brahma*).* The names and doings of legendary persons follow, and lines of legendary kings. The earliest historical facts which emerge are the founding of Tagáung, and incidents relating to the Buddha and the councils of his church in India. It is believed by Phayre that the *Savanna Bhumi* of ancient Indian books refers to Thatôn, and that under *Chrysé Chersonesus* Ptolemy refers to the Eastern Peninsula of Asia. We do not reach a connected history till the founding of Pagán about 100 A.D. From that epoch onwards the history of the peninsula, until the Burman Empire was consolidated and the dynasty of

386. FIGURES OF BYAMMA (EMBROIDERY).

* The name is also written *Myanmá*, but commonly pronounced *Bamá*, of which "Burma(h)" and "Birma" are corruptions.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
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427. PILGRIMS WITH THEIR BELONGINGS.

1884, and has had to be replaced. The body of the image is encrusted with gold which the pilgrims affix; by a miraculous quality of the image the gold leaf is said to adhere without the usual size. Next in celebrity to this image is the *Shwe-settaw*, a sacred footprint on the rock, west of Mimbu on the Irawadi (*cf.* p. 36). Only the site of the original footprint on the hill is shown. The rock which bore it clove asunder, according to the legend, in consequence of a profanation. A model of the original occupies a *tazáung* beneath. The fourth great resort of pilgrims is *Kyaittlyo Payá*, which is believed to enshrine two hairs of the Buddha. It is erected on a boulder which overhangs the peak of a mountain three thousand six hundred feet high, looking out on the plains

788 of the Sittaung river. The legend tells how this boulder—which is not a
173 rocking-stone—in days of greater piety used to float free above the summit. There are those who argue that even now a fine thread can be drawn between the boulder and the rock. About one hundred and fifty years ago

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428. SHWE-DAGON PAYA, RANGOON.

25; Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
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a Karén from this neighbourhood was taken prisoner in the wars and carried to Ava, where he eventually became *yahán*. One night he dreamt that in the cavity of a rock, on a hill near his home, were two hairs of the Buddha which had been deposited by Ôttara and Sawnasé, the missionary *yahán* who brought Buddhism to Pegu; they died and attained *parî-nirvana* at this place, and were buried at the foot of the hill. The Karén was allowed to travel to the spot, where he found what he had seen in his dream; a *zedi* was built there, which is now a famous resort of pilgrims—*Kôthena yôn* (No. 280).

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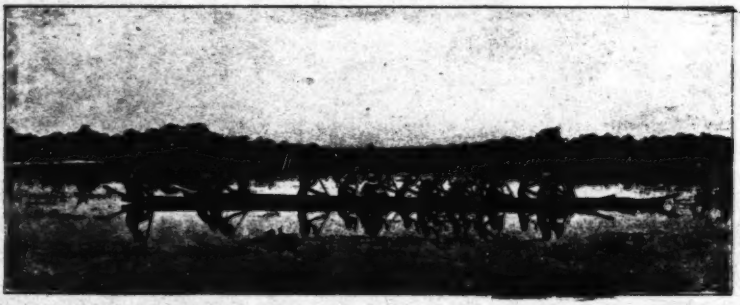

420. CANOES RACING (p. 179).

29: Slater M-4 (no date) 1951 APl Burma
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teristic specimen of the scholar's method of setting to work upon the investigation of Buddhist ideas. Ancient manuscripts, and commentaries upon them only a trifle less ancient, were racked for every slightest word that might bear upon the vexed question, and every such finding was discussed *pro* and *con* entirely with reference to its meaning as that meaning might present itself to an *occidental* mind; and it never seemed to occur to anybody that the simplest and best way to find out what Nibbāna really meant was to ask one or two of the more intelligent among the living representatives of the religion in which the word was used to express one of its leading concepts."[14] Written in dispraise of other Western authors, this criticism was also written in very lavish praise of a new book on Buddhism by Mrs Rhys Davids[15]. In that book, the authoress was far from rejecting Buddhism as a philosophy. But she also affirmed that the Buddha himself should be recognised, not only as a Sage, but as a prophet — a prophet "who had seen in a vision of universal law, not a philosophic theory only ... but a saving Truth, a Religion, whereby he might purify his own beliefs and redeem mankind."

Once Buddhism is seen for what it is, a religion, and a living religion at that, it becomes increasingly difficult to reconcile the older Western misinterpretation of Nirvana as annihilation in such a context.

4. *The Buddhist Religion*

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A glance at the long history of Buddhism shows that it has been, at different times and in different settings, a dynamic religious movement. Through many veils of legend, the Founder, Gautama,[16] is discerned as a young noble of the Sakyan clan in Northern India, some six centuries before the Christian era, who combined a sage moral insight with deep religious conviction. This conviction has been disguised for some by the fact that Gautama avoided exaggerations, for religion, by many minds, has frequently been identified with the abnormal and the extreme. But Gautama, in his first 'sermon' at Benares, preached a Middle Way. His followers were to avoid sensuality, on the one hand, and, on the other, the extremes of asceticism which he himself had practised in vain. He seems to have shared with his contemporaries a pessimistic valuation of the ceaseless round of Ill, the grim cycle of repeated, frustrating existence in which men felt themselves to be trapped, and the pith of his teaching

[14] Review in *J.B.R.S.*, Vol II, Part II (December, 1912) pp. 249ff.

[15] *Buddhism, a Study of the Buddhist Norm.*

[16] Rendered variously as Gotama, Gaudama, etc. Other names for the historic Buddha are Śākyamuni, the Tathāgata and his personal name, Siddārtha.

29: Slater M-4 (no date) 1951 AP1 Burma
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has often appeared as a diagnosis of cause and effect, linking the suffering of life to man's wayward passions, hot desires, and consequent illusion.

But it has been pointed out that he countenanced no pessimistic resignation. On the contrary, he challenged the human will to sustained effort, with the promise of higher good, He brought a gospel. The new discipline he enjoined 'making vision, making knowledge, would lead on to peace, to wisdom, to enlightenment, to Nirvana."[17] He could announce this gospel because he himself had attained enlightenment; he had become a Buddha (an Enlightened One.)

This teaching inspires among his hearers an immediate missionary zeal. Yasa, the first layman to become a disciple, converts four of his friends, then fifty, and Yasa's mother and his wife become the first women disciples. Sixty followers are sent out by the Buddha in all directions to proclaim the new faith. A celebrated ascetic is challenged and convinced. With all his five hundred adherents, he joins the new movement. There are many personal encounters. Sāriputta rushing to tell the good news to his friend, Mogallāna, may be compared with the Christian scripture, "Philip findeth Nathanael."[18] There is jealousy and division among the disciples, as well as fervour. There is a Judas (Devadatta) and a Beloved Disciple (Ānanda). There is opposition: the people of Magadha accuse Gautama of breaking up family life. These tales are legendary, but they communicate the impact which Gautama made on his contemporaries and the impression of this impact retained to the fourth and the fifth and succeeding generations. "It was all like a modern revival," comments Rhys Davids. The comment is interesting. Even an age which saw Gautama primarily as an intellectual moralist, conceiving it possible that an Erasmus could be a Luther, a Buddhaghosa a Gautama, could not fail to note the signs of religious fervour.[19]

Missionary journeys are punctuated by times of retreat and assembly. The first monasteries are established, the Order (the *Saṃgha*) is formed, and through the Order, the Doctrine (the *Dhamma*) is transmitted by recital until, two or three centuries after Gautama's death, it is embodied in written scriptures.[20]

[17] *Saṃyutta-Nikāya*, V, 420 (Trans. F. L. Woodward, *The Book of the Kindred Sayings* P.T.S., London, 1930, Part V, p. 357.) Cf. Mrs Rhys Davids, *Sakya*, chap. III, pp. 83ff.

[18] John 1: 45.

[19] But the revival, adds Rhys Davids, "must have been of a strangely dignified and intellectual sort." (*Early Buddhism*, chap. III, p. 42).

[20] The earliest date for the Pali scriptures is B.C. 247 but Sanscrit fragments and Chinese translations suggest the possibility of other scriptures. cf. Thomas, *The Life of Buddha*, p. XIX.